

Helps and Hints

Family Child Care Newsletter

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Did You Know?

Creating Connections For Learning

Family Child Care forms a vital part of our efforts to reach and teach young children. Family Child Care Providers have many opportunities throughout their extensive contacts with children and families to strengthen young children's minds and help them find their place within a community of caring.

Three Goals of Arkansas Children's Week:

1. Connecting families and early childhood programs
2. Connecting children and families
3. Connecting creative experiences and skill development

The activities detailed in this issue will help those caring for young children by filling their days with fun and exciting events, meaningful routines, and opportunities to grow with one another.

Art-Creativity

Pots of Gold:

Draw (or photocopy) a simple pot shape with an open top. Let children paint whatever rainbow colors they would like around the pot, perhaps in a rainbow shape. Let them each have a handful of Corn Pops or other small yellow cereal for the "gold". Let them glue the pieces onto the top of the pot for the gold. For older children, help them count the number of pieces glued on. Let each child tell you what to write on the pot to answer "What would you like to find at the end of the rainbow?" and "Who would you share it with?"



"I would share my pot of gold with _____"

The Making of the Green

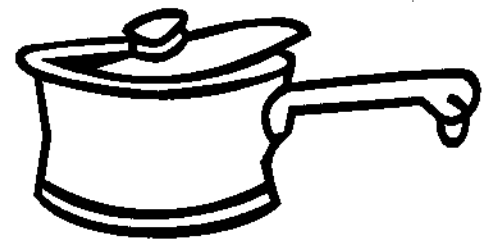
Make your own finger-paint in both blue and yellow. Spread freezer paper over a table top and tape down the corners. Put on smocks and let children smear and mix the paints on the paper to find that yellow and blue make green.

Ingredients:

- envelope of unflavored gelatin
- 1/2 cup cornstarch
- water
- food coloring

Instructions:

Soak 1 envelope of gelatin in 1/4 cup water. Mix 1/2 cup cornstarch with 3/4 cup water to a smooth paste in a saucepan. Pour two cups of boiling water into saucepan, stirring. Cook over medium heat until it comes to a boil and is clear. Remove from the heat and stir in gelatin mixture. Divide into two bowls. Add yellow food coloring to one bowl and blue food coloring to the other. Allow to cool completely.



Prepare finger-paint ahead of time!

Stories, Rhymes, and Jingles

Read Across America activities celebrate Dr. Suess's Birthday!

The Foot Book

Have the children bring in their favorite shoes on the day you read The Foot Book. Have the children wear their shoes for a footwear fashion show. Take a picture of each child and their shoes. Make a flap book titled "Whose Shoes". Glue the picture of the child to a page, and cover it with a flap which has the photo of the child's shoes. You can also graph the types of shoes the children brought. For older children, let them practice tying shoes with laces, and let them show the little ones how they do it.

The Shape of Me and Other Things

Shine a bright light at a child, and have a piece of black construction paper taped to the wall on the other side, so that you can trace their shadow (of their face) onto the paper with white chalk. Cut these out for younger children, let school age children cut their own if they are able. Mix them up and tape them to the wall. Let children and parents guess whose silhouettes are whose.

Marvin K. Mooney Will You Please Go Now

Play a game with children's ideas of how to "go". Line older children up. The leader decides on a way to go (hopping, bicycling, crawling, etc.). He or she leads the line acting out the chosen way and the class follows and joins in. Be sure they all have turn to be the leader.

The Cat in the Hat

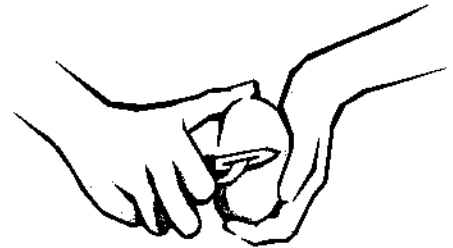
The Cat in the Hat does a lot of balancing. Ask children if they think he could really balance that many things. Fill a box with unbreakable items for children to see if they can balance. Choose things that are flat, round, and odd shaped. For younger children, let them see if they can stack them up on the floor, building a tower of items that are balanced.



Art-Creativity

Potato Fun

Share with children the importance of the potato to the people of Ireland. Ask children how they like to eat their potatoes. How many ways can you think of to cook potatoes? Cut some potatoes in half and carve shapes such as a sham-rock or kettle shape (a simple coin shape might be good to start with). Let children dip these in paint or press onto a stamp pad and use as stampers. If you use cash register tape these can be used as a border for a bulletin board or wall display.



The simple potato can lead to big fun!

Squeeze Bottle Paint

For glistening paint try this simple recipe. Fill a variety of empty squeeze bottles such as dish-washing liquid, school glue bottles, chocolate syrup bottles.

Mix together:

1/2 cup flour

1/2 cup water

1/2 cup salt

Food coloring or powdered tempera paint

Let children squeeze the mixture onto stiff cardboard (such as the inside of a cardboard cereal box). The salt makes the mixture have a glistening effect after it dries.

Hand-Print Rainbow

With a pencil, lightly draw a simple rainbow arc on a large piece of freezer paper or butcher paper. Provide several colors of paint on styrofoam plates. Let children press their hands into the paint and stamp them in rows to form the colors of the rainbow. For a fun display, let children tell you what their treasures are and write them on a "pot of gold" to place at the end.



Stories, Rhymes, and Jingles

Color Kites

Change the ending to the song from the movie "Mary Poppins".

Let's go fly a kite

Up where it's clear and bright

Let's all go fly a kite.

Let's go fly a (color) kite

Up where it's clear and bright

Let's go fly a (color) kite.

Let each child have a turn to choose the color.

A Silly Spring Song

I looked out the window, and what did I see?

Popcorn popping on the apricot tree!

Spring has brought me such a nice surprise,

Popcorn popping right before my eyes!

I can take a handful and make a treat,

A popcorn ball that smells so sweet!

It wasn't really so, but it seemed to be

Popcorn popping on the apricot tree!



How Does Your Garden Grow?

First you take the seed and you plant it in the ground.

Next a rain cloud comes and waters all around.

Next the sun shines brightly, without a sound.

And in just a few days, a flower is found!

Art-Creativity

Glass Top Shamrocks

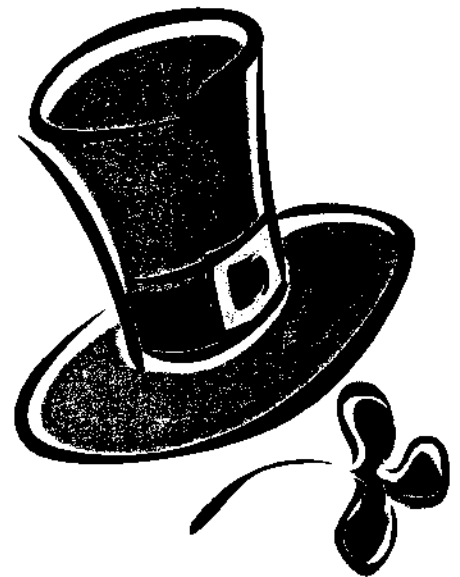
Cut out a shamrock shape for each child. Then drop a small amount of light corn syrup onto it and add a few drops of green food coloring. Let children smear it around until the food coloring is blended in evenly. When it is dry it will be smooth like green glass.

Can Stamping

Wash out three empty soup or vegetable cans and let dry. Tape them together in a cluster. Pour out some green paint onto a plate and add a damp paper towel (this will act as a stamp pad). Let children use the can stamps to decorate a large piece of freezer paper with the shamrock shapes, adding detail if they like.

St. Patrick's Day Hats

Purchase a Chinnet paper bowl for each child and use a hole punch to make two holes on either side of the rim. Let children paint the hats green and let dry. Thread some 1/4 inch elastic through the holes and tie to keep it on their heads. Let children glue a variety of items on their hats such as feathers, ribbons, beads, or buttons. When dry the children have a hat to wear for a St. Patrick's Day party or just for the day.



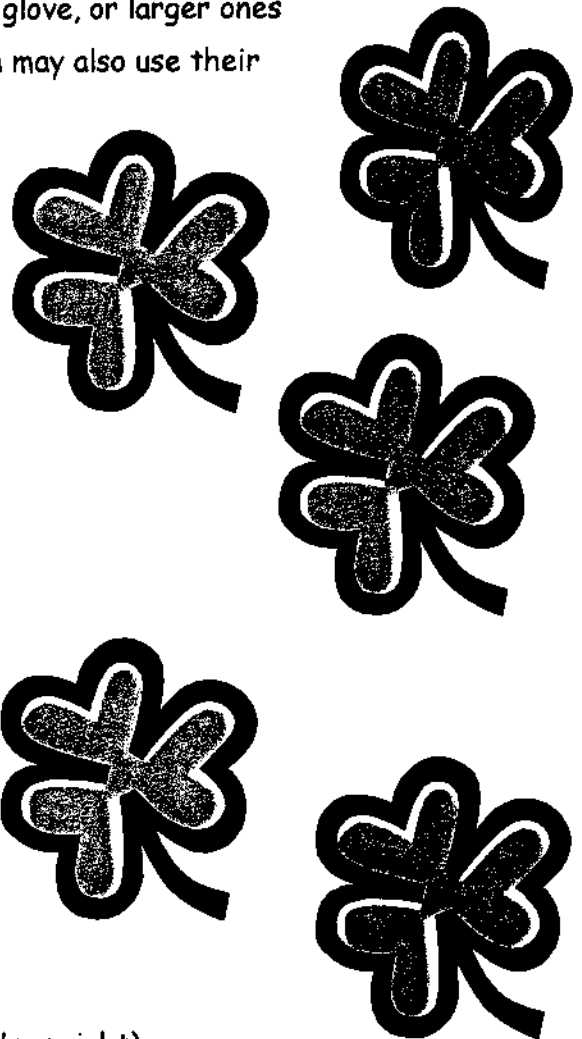
Let children personalize their hats with a variety of decorative items.

Stories, Rhymes and Jingles

Five Little Shamrocks

(Cut out and laminate 5 shamrocks to use with a velcro glove, or larger ones to use with a felt board. Add one each verse. Children may also use their fingers to count with this rhyme.)

One green shamrock in the morning dew,
Another one sprouted and then there were two.
Two green shamrocks, growing beneath a tree,
Another one sprouted and then there were three.
Three green shamrocks, by the cottage door,
Another one sprouted, and then there were four.
Four green shamrocks, near a bee hive
Another one sprouted and then there were five.
Five little shamrocks, bright and emerald green,
Think of all the luck these shamrocks will bring!



Ten little fingers

I have ten little fingers and they all belong to me (hands upright)
I can make them do things, would you like to see?
I can shut them up tight, (shut them up into fists)
Or open them up wide. (open them wide)
I can put them together or make them all hide. (close fists together)
I can make them jump high. (swing hands over head)
I can make them go low. (swing hands down low)
I can fold them up quietly and hold them just so. (place hands in lap)

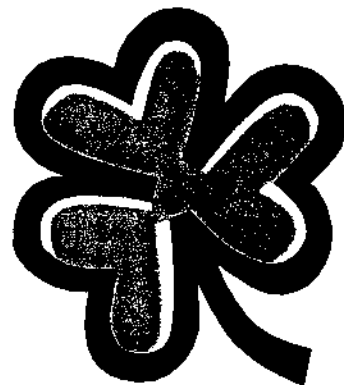


Use this rhyme
before circle time
stories.

Art-Creativity

Growing Shamrocks

From an old washcloth or towel cut out a shamrock shape. Wet it and let children sprinkle it with grass seeds. Place it in a pie tin or on a cookie sheet and let it sit near a window. Let the children take turns watering it during the week (it should be kept moist). This grows quickly.



Lacing Cards

Trace a shamrock shape onto stiff paper or cardboard. Cover with clear contact paper to make it sturdier. Punch holes all around the edges. Let children use gold ribbon with a large plastic needle to "sew" around the edges. Another variation is to use the thick foam sheets available in craft stores. This is not as durable but provides a different texture.

Texture Cards

Cut four or more shamrock shapes out of cardboard or poster board and cover them with a variety of different fabrics or textures. You might use sandpaper on one, corduroy, woven cotton, write on one with puffy paint, or try something like bubble wrap. Let older children place a piece of paper over each one and rub with a crayon to see what pattern results from the different textures. Let toddlers and infants feel the textures and use the words for them describing the feeling. "OOOh—bumpy!" "This one is smooth!"

Colored Pasta

You can create richly colored pasta for children to glue on a variety of collages. Simply place pasta shapes (smaller ones like shells work best) in a zip-top bag, fill the rest of the bag with rubbing alcohol and add a few drops of food coloring. Let rest overnight, then drain the liquid and let pasta dry on a paper towel. Try different shapes of noodles and combinations of colors!



Cooking and Children Mix Well

Rainbow Snacks

You will need half a banana for each child and one package of red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple Jell-o. Cut each banana into six pieces. Pour Jell-o packets into small bowls. Have children dip each piece into the different bowls. The longer the banana sits in the mix, the brighter the color will become. For older children, ask them to put their bananas into the order of the colors on a rainbow.



Inside-out Sandwich

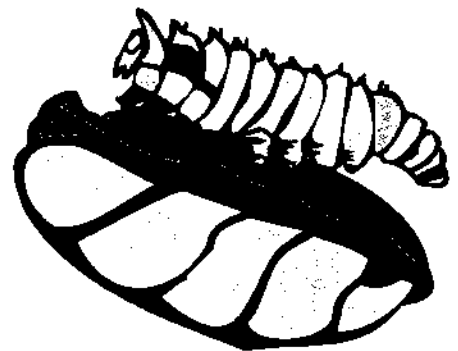
Take a roll of French bread or some smaller breadsticks. Wrap a slice of lunchmeat around the bread, followed by a slice of cheese. Serve with other sandwich ingredients and condiments, if desired.

Cat in the Hat Cake

This makes a very large cake so invite your parents to join you when it's time to eat! Purchase 2 vanilla cake mixes, and two strawberry cake mixes, two vanilla frostings and a large jar of strawberry jam. Measure and bake the cakes, let them cool, then pile in alternating layers of red and white, just like the "Cat's" Hat. Ice with alternating white frosting and strawberry jam.

Very Hungry Caterpillar

Cut an egg carton in half for each child, so that you have a line of 6 cups. Line these with foil. Let children spoon yogurt into the first cup and add 2 chocolate chips for eyes. Then have children put in one apple slice, two pear pieces, three plum pieces, four strawberry slices, and five orange sections. They can dip the fruit in the yogurt.

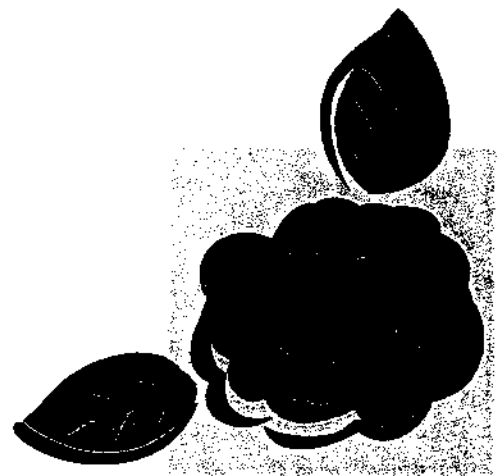


Be sure to mention how sick the caterpillar got from eating junk food!

Art-Creativity

Flower Prints

Let children pick flowers and leaves from your back yard or a nearby field. Bring them in and wash them and let them dry slightly. Pour a small amount of paint onto a plate and let them dip the flowers top-down into the paint, then press lightly onto a piece of paper. Try different combinations, such as pastel colored paint on white or cream colored paper, or white paint on bright primary colored paper. Look at the different patterns made by the flowers. Some that work well include daisies and other flat flowers, fern leaves and clover leaves.



Spring Kites

No two prints will look alike.

Give each child two same-size pieces of square paper and allow them to fingerpaint on them. After the paint has dried, staple the papers together, painted side out, and stuff it a little with tissue to make it puffy. Punch a hole in one corner and attach a thread for hanging. Punch a hole in the opposite corner to attach a tail made either from knotted fabric strips or crepe paper. Hang them from the ceiling (near a vent or open window) for a colorful way to bring Spring inside. Take your babies by them and let them bat at the tails to make them move. Talk about the colors. You might also attach something noisy to the tails to entertain the babies, such as spoons that clank together, or jingle bells. Talk with them about the noises.

Cooking and Children Mix Well

Shamrock Swirls

Into a tub of whipped cream cheese, mix several drops of green food coloring. Let children use butter knives to spread it out onto pieces of white bread. Cut off the crusts of the bread and roll up. Slice the bread crosswise to see the swirls, then arrange 3 swirls on each plate in a shamrock shape.



Let an adult do the microwaving.

Gold Cookies

Melt a package of butterscotch chips in a glass bowl in the microwave (an adult should do this part). Let children spread peanut butter out onto a round buttery cracker and top with another cracker. Dip them into the butterscotch with tongs, and let cool on wax paper.

Leprechaun Hats

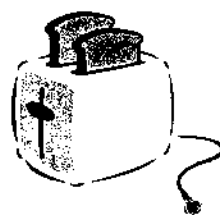
Mix green food coloring into cream cheese. Let children spread cream cheese onto vanilla wafers and top with a green marachino cherry.

Rainbow Toast

Let children mix different colors of food coloring into small cups of milk. With a new set of paint brushes, let them paint and drip and dabble the colored milk onto a slice of white bread. Toast in the toaster and the rainbow colors will show up when it's finished. Eat with golden butter!

Green Eggs and Ham

Chop ham the night before and soak it in water with quite a bit of green food coloring in it. To make the eggs green, just add a little bit of food coloring before you scramble them. Don't forget to read Green Eggs and Ham!



Art-Creativity

Nature Bracelets

Like to take your kids on walks? Wrap masking tape around each child's wrist, wrong side out (use wide tape or make several loops). As you walk, encourage them to gather leaves, flowers and buds, or whatever they like and stick it to their "bracelet".

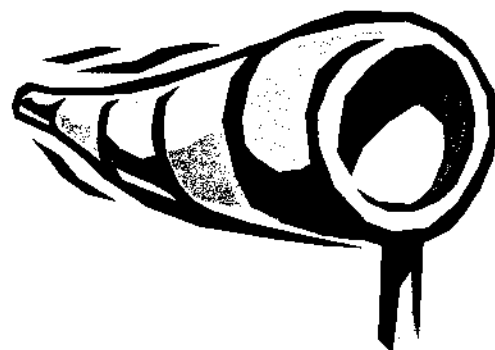
Pasta Flowers

Dye Campanella pasta (also known as bellflowers) pretty spring colors using alcohol and food coloring, let dry. Gather the following materials: the colored pasta, old play dough, pipe cleaners, plastic tops from liquid detergent and softener jugs (or plastic apple-sauce or pudding containers, washed out). Cut the pipe cleaners in half. Have children thread the pasta onto the pipe cleaner to create a flower. Fill the containers with old play dough. These become the flower pots. Let children stick the flowers into the flower pots, and the dough will hold their arrangement in place.

Two Windsocks

1. Ask children to bring in an empty toilet paper tube. Let them paint, and/or stick stickers on the tube. Punch 2 holes in one end to thread a hanger through. Tape or glue pieces of ribbon or strips from plastic shopping bags to the end.
2. Give each child a small plastic berry basket. String a long hanging thread through one corner and knot. Let children tie ribbon, crepe paper, or strips of plastic sacks to the basket, hanging off the bottom.

Hang these from your front porch to welcome parents.



Cooking and Children Mix Well

Scones

Ingredients:

2 cups self rising flour

1/2 cup milk

3 Tablespoons butter or margarine

A dash of salt

Directions:

Mix all ingredients and let children knead and squish and shape their scones. You can bake them as shaped or knead them, press flat and cut with cookie cutters. Bake at 425 for 12 to 15 minutes. Serve with jam.



Shamrock biscuits

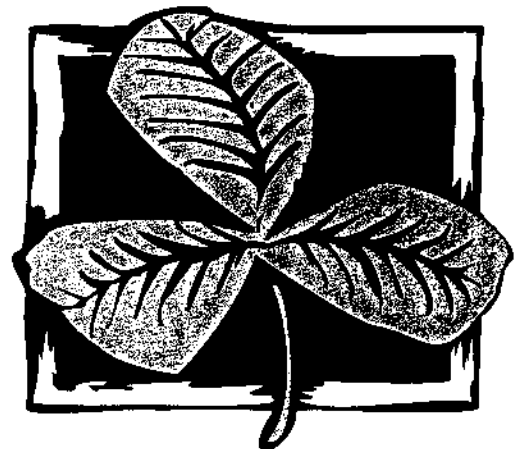
Ingredients:

Canned biscuits (flaky kind)

Green sprinkles (or add green food coloring to granulated sugar and stir)

Directions:

Split layers of 2 biscuits so that you have 4 pieces. Lay three flat in a shamrock shape and roll the other one and press flat for the stem. Sprinkle with the green sugar and bake just slightly less than package directions call for. Green shamrock biscuits!



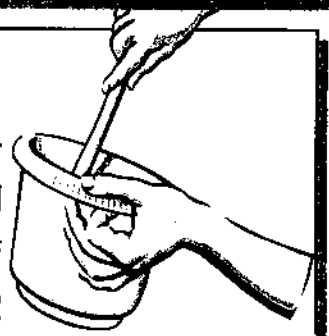
Let's find out:

Why are shamrocks important to the Irish? What does it stand for? And who was St. Patrick?

Art-Creativity

Pots of Gold

This is a week long project for older preschoolers and school age children. For each child have a medium size plastic bowl. Cover the bowl with petroleum jelly or cooking spray so the paper mache will come off easily. Let children tear old newspapers into strips 1-2 inches wide and about a foot long. Mix together 2 and 1/2 cups flour with 2 cups of water for paste. Dip the newspaper strips into the paste and lay one by one over the upside down bowl until it is covered. Let dry overnight and repeat the next day. When this has dried over night, remove the paper bowls and trim around the edges with scissors. Sandpaper will smooth the rough outside of the bowl. Paint the bowls black with poster paints, or have an adult take them outside and spray paint them black. On the next day, let children decorate their bowls with whatever they like—stickers, collage material, etc. Leave them out the day before St. Patrick's Day and see what the Leprechauns might leave behind. You can leave small treats like healthy snacks, and add some gold-foil covered chocolate coins.



Whipped Snow

You will need: 1 Tbsp. Ivory Snow soap powder and 1 Tbsp. Water. Working in pairs, one child holds the plastic bowl while the other turns the crank on a manual egg beater. Beat until it is very stiff, then spoon onto a table top to finger paint, or use freezer paper as a cover and add green food coloring to mix in.

Sand Shapes

Place 2 inches or more of sand in a plastic storage tub and cover the floor with a plastic table cloth underneath the tub. Cut the bottoms off a variety of discarded plastic containers which have interesting shapes and patterns such as 2 liter pop bottles, 20 ounce pop bottles, peanut butter containers. Add lids of different shapes as well, such as liquid detergent bottles. Add a little water to the sand to make it stick together well and let children press shapes in the sand.



Recycle plastic bottles by making sand molds!

Household Plants

While household plants add beauty and interest to an indoor play space, care providers need to be aware that many common indoor house plants are poisonous, and therefore should be kept out of a home with young children. However, according to *The Healthy Children Handbook*, there are some plants that are safe for growing around young children.

Safe plants:

- ♦ African violet
- ♦ Begonia
- ♦ Boston fern
- ♦ Coleus
- ♦ Dracaena
- ♦ Hens and chickens
- ♦ Jade plant
- ♦ Peperomia
- ♦ Prayer plant
- ♦ Spider plant
- ♦ Swedish ivy
- ♦ Wandering Jew
- ♦ Wax plant
- ♦ Weeping fig



Beware of indoor houseplants without names. Poisonous plants can be a hazard to children in the nibbling stage. When in doubt—get it out!

Art-Creativity

Hunting for Treasure

Gather some medium sized stones such as gray driveway gravel and spray paint them gold ahead of time to be the pretend treasure. Make clue cards which read "The gold is on the blue chair." "The gold is behind the books", creating easy to understand directions for the hiding places in your play space. These will be the notes left behind by the Leprechauns in your pretend game of hunting for treasure. Place the cards in a "pot of gold" and let children draw them out one at a time. Help them read their clue, encouraging older children to sound out the words. This helps toddlers and preschoolers learn position words and older children recognize sight words. Older children might also enjoy hiding the gold for the little ones and demonstrating their reading skills as well.



More Hunting Fun—Map Skills

Draw a simple map of your play space and show your children where things are on the map. Let them tell you details to add. When you are satisfied with the map, make photocopies of it for each child. Leave the "gold" in various places around the room and mark them on the children's map—but don't mark the maps all the same. For example, Mark's map shows the gold on the couch and by the sink, but Amy's shows the gold on the window sill and magazine rack. This way they will all have treasure to find. Let them trade their treasure for a hug!

More Precious Than Gold

For a fun display for children and parents, make a large "pot of gold" to hang on the wall. Cut children's pictures out in circle shapes and glue them on the pot with the caption "We're more precious than gold". Help the little ones learn each other's names by pointing at the faces. You can protect this from being torn by covering it with clear contact paper, but be sure to leave it at their level to enjoy.



Remind each child
that they are pre-
cious to you!

Did You Know?

Teaching Self Help Skills

The time to emphasize teaching self help skills is in toddlerhood. The toddler who has learned to use a spoon becomes the three year old who can use a fork and eventually the four year old who can spread butter with a knife —and then the five year old who can cut up her own hamburger patty. It's not always



Can children reach what

easy to teach toddlers self-help skills. Their own motivation to become independent makes them want to do things themselves, but also can make them want to resist what you want them to do. This is natural, and a child should not be punished for asserting their individuality. Most toddlers are anxious to do certain tasks for themselves, but learning how can take so long that often adults will step in to help just to speed things up. This can be counterproductive. In the long run it is helpful to have a two year old take all the time he needs to put on his own shoes, because as he learns how he grows in self confidence and it will take less time later on. Having dress-up clothes available for toddlers with simple buttons and pull-on elastic skirts lets them practice dressing skills at their own pace, and a mirror for them to see their accomplishments can be a big motivator. When planning to go outside, be sure to give toddlers enough warning ahead of time for them to make the mental adjustment, then plenty of time to wiggle arms into coats.



Help children learn to blow their noses by placing tissues where they can reach and reminding

Child sized eating utensils help children manage meal time with less mess (for comparison—have you ever tried eating with serving utensils?). When tools are too big and unwieldy children can become frustrated and return to using their hands. Try not to do for a child what he is able to do for himself, and praise him often for his efforts. If parents are able, ask that they send children to care in clothes which are easy for children to manage, especially during the toilet training stage. It is important for toddlers to see themselves as "big kids" who are able to do

Sing, Song, Sway

The Leprechaun Fingerplay

A leprechaun is small and green

(use hands to indicate a small person)

He hides where he cannot be seen

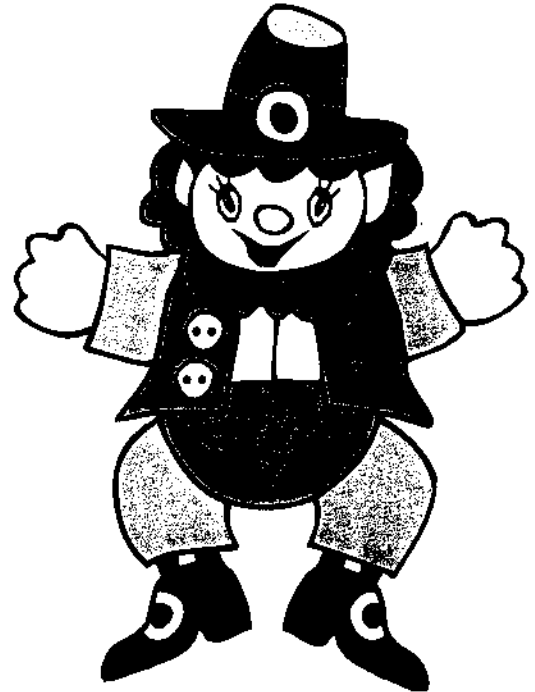
(cover your eyes with your hands)

But if you catch one on this day,

(make grabbing motion with arms)

He must give his gold away.

(pretend to put gold in your pocket)



Wee Little Patrick

(Sung to the tune of *Yankee Doodle*)

Patrick is a leprechaun,

He has a sack of gold.

He hides it in a special place

Between two stumps I'm told.

I think I saw Patrick out in the woods at play.

He smiled and laughed and winked his eye

And then he ran away.

Don't try to follow Patrick

To find his treasure sack.

He'll twist and jump and run away

And he never will come back.

Sing, Song, Sway

Two Caterpillar Songs

(Both are sung to the tune of Itsy Bitsy Spider)

The fuzzy caterpillar curled upon a leaf,
Spun her little crysalis and then fell fast asleep.
While she was sleeping, she dreamed that she could fly,
And later when she woke up, she was a butterfly.



The little caterpillar crawled up into a tree,
Spun his cocoon and slept so quietly.
All through the Winter he did not make a sound,
He dreamt of his new life when he'd be flying round.
While he was sleeping the snow did gently fall,
Winter came and went, then he heard the robin's call,
"Come on Mr. Butterfly, out of your cocoon
Spread your wings and fly for me while I sing my tune!

Growing Flowers

(sung to the tune of I'm a Little Teapot)

I plant a little seed in the cold, cold ground.
Out comes the yellow sun, big and round.
Down come the raindrops soft and slow,



Sing, Song, Sway

Leprechaun Stew

(lightly pound fists on legs while you chant)

Leprechaun stew, leprechaun stew!

If I don't get some,

I don't know what I'll do!

Give away my pot of gold,

Give away my shoe.

But don't give away my leprechaun stew!



Leprechaun Song

(sung to *I'm a Little Teapot*)

I'm a little leprechaun

Dressed in green,

The tiniest man that you've ever seen.

If you ever catch me, so it's told,

I'll give you my pot of gold.

Leprechaun March

(march in place while you sing this to the tune of *Sing a Song of Sixpence*)

The leprechauns are marching, they're marching through the hall.

They're marching on the ceiling, they're marching on the wall.

They're marching two by two and now it's four by four.

You say you cannot see them? Look out! Here come some more!

Sing, Song, Sway

Come and Fly a Kite

Come and Fly a kite

And watch it sail

(hold hand up high)

Across the sky

Waving it's tail

(wave hand back and forth)



A Kite

I often sit and wish that I
Could be a kite up in the sky,
And ride upon the breeze and go
Whichever way I chanced to blow.

It's Raining

It's raining, it's raining!

Oh me, oh my!

(look upward)

But our umbrellas will keep us dry!

(form umbrellas above head with arms)

After my Bath

After my bath I try, try, try

To rub with a towel till I'm dry, dry, dry.

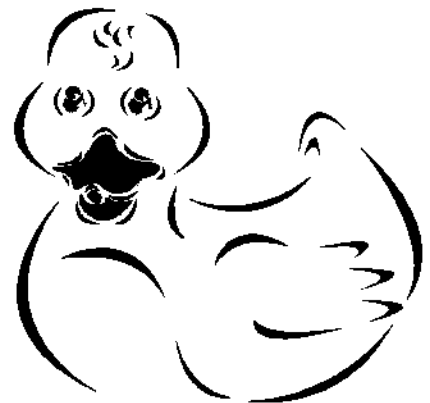
(pretend to rub body with towel.)

Hands to dry, and fingers and toes,

And two wet legs and a shiny nose.

(point to each body part)

Just think how much less time I'd take



Sing, Song, Sway

The Leprechaun Song

(sung to *Mary Had a Little Lamb*)

I'm a little leprechaun, leprechaun, leprechaun

I'm a little leprechaun who likes to hide my gold.

I dress in green from head to toe, head to toe, head to toe

I dress in green from head to toe, I wear green all day long!

You'll never catch me or my gold, not my gold, not my gold!

You'll never catch me or my gold! I hide it much too well!



I'm a Little Leprechaun

(sung to *I'm a Little Teapot*)

I'm a little leprechaun, short and green.

I live under toadstools, and I've never been seen.

If you follow a rainbow to a pot of gold,

Your luck will change so I've been told!

Rainy Day

(sung to *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*)

Rainy, rainy, rainy day,

Water puddles all for play.

The sky is cloudy, but I don't mind

Puddles, galoshes and mud pies.

Rainy, rainy, rainy day,

